



ST. PAUL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
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KEEPING OUR CONNECTIONS – UPDATE 11



Friday October 9 2020

Dear Community,

It is with great delight and much anticipation that I say, welcome back to onsite learning & teaching for Term 4. On Monday October 12 we will welcome back all students from Prep to Year 6.

We have all endured and come through the uncertainty of new ways of learning & teaching and now it is time for us to return to some normality for our kids, our families and our staff.

I would like to express my sincerest and deepest gratitude & appreciation for the work of the St. Paul's staff team, during these most challenging of times. As a team of educators, they have stepped up and shone! Their positivity and commitment towards our school, towards each other, towards our families and most importantly towards our children, has been outstanding. As a learning & teaching community it is appropriate & necessary that we acknowledge & appreciate their efforts & the determination with which they have so diligently approached their responsibilities.

As a community we have all done an outstanding job through great adversity & uncertainty; words cannot express how proud I am to be a part of this community, as we have together met such great adversity & uncertainty. As we move forward into Term Four, let us all do so with a sense of hope for what may be possible.

I have no doubt there will be challenges ahead - we will need to acknowledge & support parent & guardian worries & anxieties, as well as worried & anxious kids. But we know that children are resilient and they bounce back quickly.

As a staff team I can assure you that we will continue to work together & with you to address any issues which may arise with the kids returning to school. We are ever mindful that 'one size does not fit all'! Every child is different and every child will need to be respected for how they are feeling as they return to school. **Our highest priority** will be the mental health, wellbeing and safety of all children.

Our next priority must be learning and teaching. Some students have been better able to progress in their learning in the remote and flexible learning environment, others have maintained their rate of progress, and some, despite their best efforts and the efforts of their families and teachers, have struggled. Our priority will be to ensure that those who have fallen behind can catch up and those who have progressed significantly can continue to be extended and stretched in their learning.

Literacy and Numeracy across the curriculum will remain a focus, with adaptations to be made to our teaching and learning programs in Term 4, so as to be responsive to the children's needs. It is my long held belief that if a child can read, write & count, they are best placed to learn.

I have included some further advice from child psychologists, on transitioning back to onsite learning & teaching. Teachers have these and other resources which address issues that may arise with our kids returning to school; their focus has been and will continue to be on the kids' return and how they can best support them in that return to our 'new normal'.

I would like to wish every member of our St. Paul's learning & teaching community all the very best, as we return to onsite learning & teaching over the next week.

And as we return, let us look to our patron St. Paul for inspiration, who, in his writings, said, "*With Christ all things are possible*" and that, "*Hope does not disappoint*". Let us all then work together for what is possible, with a real sense of hope!



Keep well and stay safe everyone.

Denis

Denis J. Daly

Principal

COVID SAFE AT ST. PAUL'S

COVID Safe Practices will continue to be implemented on everyone's return to for Term 4. These will include but are not limited to:

- An emphasis on handwashing
- Extra local sanitising & cleaning
- Enhanced professional contract sanitising & cleaning
- Air flow & ventilation in classrooms & work areas
- Where possible, lessons being held outdoors
- Lining up at classroom doors
- Multiple afternoon pickup points (A-K, L-R & S-Z)

St Paul's has an extensive COVID Safe Plan, which will be issued to parents & guardians.



RETURNING TO ONSITE LEARNING & TEACHING

WEEK 2 ONWARDS:

- Monday October 12 onwards, the school will be open to all children from Prep to Year 6
- Morning Drop Off will be from 8.30 am to 8.50 am, in the main & rear (basketball courts) car parks; drivers must park & remain in their vehicles; children must walk to the staff on duty, who will direct them into the school
- Afternoon Pick Up will be from 3.15 pm onwards; children will gather in family groups (A-K, L-R & S-Z) and must be picked up from 3 locations: A-K from the church, L-R from the hall (side entrance) and S-Z from the D.C./library.
- Out of School Hours Care (Before & After School Care Program) will operate in the Multipurpose Room

OTHER DETAILS:

- Adults must only come onto the school site for essential reasons; they may only come to the office; they must sign a School Entry Declaration form each time they attend at the office
- Summer uniform to be worn

- All children must have drink bottles for water; all drinking taps have been turned off for health & safety reasons.
- Canteen will operate from Week 2 onwards; all orders are to be made online through Flexischools; window service will be available for drinks, ice blocks & snacks
- Out of School Hours Care (Before & After School Care Program) will operate from the beginning of the term (Week 1 in the hall and Week 2 onwards in the Multipurpose Room); please be sure to register your children to attend and confirm your OSHC Registration details are current

CHROMEBOOKS:

- All Chromebooks must be returned, in the blue carry bags they were loaned in and in good order, in the week beginning Monday October 12
- Any damaged Chromebooks will be repaired or replaced, with the cost of repairs or replacement to be covered by parents or guardians

FACE MASKS:

- A fitted face mask must be worn by all persons 12 years of age and older when in public/outside of their homes
- Children may wear fitted face masks at school if their parents or guardians wish them to do so
- Face shields, bandanas or scarves are no longer permitted as face coverings

PREP (FOUNDATION) 2021: ORIENTATION & TRANSITION

Families who have a child due to start school next year will be contacted next week to discuss potential changes to this year's Orientation Program, due to COVID-related restrictions. Orientation will go ahead as planned if restrictions are eased and schools are permitted to have larger numbers of children, parents & guardians onsite. If numbers remain limited then an alternate program is currently being planned, which may include online orientation materials & meetings, smaller numbers of children & parents/guardians onsite and hard-copy materials being posted home. Further details will be provided as they are planned.



NOT RETURNING TO ST. PAUL'S IN 2021

If students in Prep to Grade 5 will not be returning to St. Paul's in 2021, would parents or guardians please contact the office, to let us know?

TERM 4 CALENDAR

TBC = To Be Confirmed

OCTOBER:

- Monday October 5: Children of Permitted Workers & vulnerable children return to onsite learning
- Monday October 12: All children from Prep to Year 6 return to onsite learning
- Friday October 23: 'Thank You Day (Grand Final)' public holiday
- Sunday October 25: World Teachers Day (Australia)

NOVEMBER:

- Monday November 2: Report Writing Day
- Tuesday October 3: Melbourne Cup Public Holiday
- Thursday November 4 – Tuesday November 10: Book Week – Christmas Book Fair
- Wednesday November 11: Prep 2021 Orientation Session (Parents & Guardians only) 'Starting School: How Your Family Can THRIVE (Not Just Survive!)' – Carly McGauran, Child Psychologist (webinar or face-to-face) (TBC)
- Monday November 23: Prep 2021 Orientation Session 1 – Parents, guardians & children (TBC)
- Monday November 30: Prep 2021 Orientation Session 2 – children only (TBC)

DECEMBER:

- Friday December 4: Christmas Carnival & Carols (TBC)
- Monday December 7: Prep 2021 Orientation Session 3 – children only (TBC)
- Thursday December 10: End-of-Year Whole School Mass (TBC) & Year 6 Graduation Liturgy, Ceremony & Supper (TBC)
- Friday December 11: Reports sent home & Year 6 Finish (TBC)
- Monday December 14: P-5 'Step Up Day'
- Wednesday December 16: P-5 Students Finish
- Thursday December 17: Staff Finish

School Terms						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

RETRUNING TO SCHOOL: WHAT TO WATCH FOR!

So the students are coming back to school and there will be lots of mixed emotions!

This last experience of online learning has been so much longer and presented everyone with challenges. It has been a time where we have been restricted in our movements, visiting family and friends, not engaging in after school activities, like soccer, swimming, dance classes, etc. We have all experienced the changes in routine and some have experienced THE personal loss of a loved one or friend.

All of these things will have impacted on us, both children and adults, in many different ways. Teachers have been talking about and planning for the return to school since late last term.

As teachers we have been talking about the different ways our students may come in next week – excited yet unsure or for some, anxious about returning. We know it will take some time for all of us to resettle into a new routine and rhythm and so we are focused on our students' wellbeing first, re-establishing our connections with the larger group and on our learning. It is so important to check in and find where each student is placed in this process.

So while we are very focused on our students, it is important for parents & guardians to be supported as well. A number of parents have watched short videos by Dr. Michael Carr Gregg on his School TV site. He has another special report that talks about the transition back to school. It has some particularly helpful ideas for adolescents. It can be found on,

[Schootv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus-transition-back](https://schootv.me/wellbeing_news/special-report-coronavirus-transition-back)

We are including a two page article called **Reconnect and Re-engage**, which has some information and ideas especially around Separation Anxiety. Separation anxiety may show up in many ways and can take some time to settle. One way of talking about the subject might be though discussing what can be done to help our pets manage your return to school and work. Having the children make some suggestions of ways to help their pets handle the change, can help them feel some level of control.

Please be assured that we are only a phone call away to be able to help you and your children manage the return-to-school process.



Reconnect and Re-engage!

Tips for parents to support their child's return to onsite schooling following the Covid-19 Pandemic

With schools starting to return to a routine of on site learning our children can be filled with mixed emotions. It is also very normal that some children may display symptoms of separation anxiety as they anticipate this change to the routine that they had adjusted to during the pandemic, along with the natural ongoing worries that continue about Covid-19 in Australia. As parents and carers it is important for us to be prepared to respond to and support these differing emotions that arise in our children so that we can support their transition back to a school routine successfully.



Your child may be experiencing a myriad of emotions about returning to school after such a long absence from attending school during the pandemic. Some of the emotions they may be feeling include;

- Happiness - They might be happy to play and engage with their friends and recommence a more 'normal' style of play on the school grounds.
- Worry - Children may be worried about what they have missed out on by not being present at school both socially and academically. They may be concerned that their friendships have changed. When your child returns to school their closest friends or supports may not be physically present at school the same day they are and this may also cause your child to worry about returning.
- Insecure - Your child may be more concerned about the threat of COVID-19 in school and the presence of germs. School has always been a safe place for your child and with all of the changes which have occurred in the environment, that sense of security may be challenged. This may result in a reluctance to attend school.
- Excitement - Your child might be excited to leave home and return to the regular routine of face to face school, including seeing their classroom teacher.

What behaviours to expect in primary school children

Primary aged children often struggle with communicating their feelings and worries verbally to us. Their main communication tool for us to interpret what they may be experiencing is their behaviour. The following behaviours may present in children who are feeling apprehensive about returning to school after the pandemic:

Refusal or hesitation around attending school	Whinging	Difficulty sleeping, nightmares	Being unusually clingy	Teary, crying, distressed
Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, nausea	Shaking with fear	Shyness Withdrawing from others	Lacking trust in their teacher or other school staff	Refusing to speak

Strategies and practical tips

Our parenting - adults are in a challenging position as we too have mixed feelings about the 'return to normal' post pandemic, and we may be processing the numerous impacts it has had on our family. Try to be kind to yourself and monitor your own wellbeing daily so that you are aware when you may be less resilient or tolerant than usual, and can take action in the form of self care to restore some balance.

- Being available to recognise and respond with compassion to behaviours that may indicate your child is struggling with returning to school.
- Our children look to the adults in their lives for guidance on how to react, feel and behave. Remember that they are sponges that absorb from us even when we aren't aware. Try to limit their exposure to negative conversations, media messages, and anything that may add to their worries about returning to school.



Practical strategies - anytime your child has experienced separation anxiety you have probably already used a range of strategies to help them cope and adjust to being away from you. Some strategies that may help during this time include:

- If you suspect your child will struggle with the transition back to school let their teacher know as soon as you can, so that the school can be best prepared to provide consistent support when they arrive at school.
- Support your child to connect with their class teacher or another familiar staff member when they arrive at school, or even settle into a game with their familiar friends.
- Remind your child of who/when/how they are getting home from school.
- Say goodbye briefly, don't make it longer than it needs to be. Being kind but firm.
- Maintain a calm relaxed demeanour, even though it can be upsetting if your child is distressed to leave you.
- Sometimes a small familiar item from home carried by the child provides some reassurance to the child while they are away from their parents. Choose an item that isn't sentimental or too large and distracting in class. Sometimes even a family photo or a photo of their pet helps a child's sense of connection to home.
- Similarly, you could pop a note in your child's lunch box that they can look forward to.
- Some parents find that their children are reassured by drawing a heart on their child's hand, telling the child that they can touch/press it when they want to feel close to their parents/family.

If you have concerns about your child's emotional wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact your school or classroom teacher who will consult the school counsellor for additional support to be provided to your family during these challenging times.



Written by Karina Greenfield and Jessica Austin, CEDP Wellbeing Counsellors